REMARKS

Claims 1-9 have been amended, and claims 10-32 have been canceled. Examination of the claims, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

1. (Once Amended) A catheter assembly comprising:

a hollow sheath having a proximal portion and a tip;

an elongate operative element slidably and rotatably housed within the sheath, the operative element comprising a distal end and a proximal end;

the elongate operative element comprising a relatively stiff[, self-supporting] initial section extending from [at] the proximal end thereof; [and]

a rotatable combined connector secured to the proximal end of the operative element, said combined connector comprising a data/information connector and a mechanical connector; and said combined connector comprising an angled rotary alignment surface that is adapted to blind mate with a corresponding connector of a drive unit that has an angled rotary alignment surface.

2. (As filed) The catheter assembly according to claim 1 wherein said data/information connector comprises an electrical connector.

3. (As filed) The catheter assembly according to claim 1 wherein said mechanical connector comprises a rotary drive connector.

4. (Once Amended) The catheter assembly according to claim 3 wherein said rotary drive connector comprises a drive surface which simultaneously extends [an] axially [-] and circumferentially[-extending drive surface].

5. (As filed) The catheter assembly according to claim 1 wherein said combined connector comprises a rotary alignment surface.

6. (As filed) The catheter assembly according to claim 1 wherein said elongate operative element comprises an imaging cable having an image element at said distal end thereof.

7. (As filed) The catheter assembly according to claim 1 wherein said initial section comprises a metal tube.

8. (As filed) The catheter assembly according to claim 1 further comprising a fluid seal between said proximal portion of said sheath and the initial section of the elongate operative element.

9. (Once Amended) The catheter system according to claim 1 wherein said elongate operative element comprises a flexible imaging core and a relatively stiff tube at the proximal end thereof to create a relatively stiff[, self-supporting] initial section of the elongate operative element extending [at the] from the proximal end thereof.

Please cancel claims 10-21.